

## **PROTECTING AND MERGING A HEAD STACK ASSEMBLY OF A DATA STORAGE DEVICE**

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### **Abstract of the Disclosure**

An apparatus for protecting and merging a head stack assembly with a disc stack of a data storage device. The head stack assembly comprises a cantilevered flexure which supports a transducer at a distal end thereof. A carrier includes a carrier support surface arranged to contactingly support the distal end of the flexure. A merge tool is adapted to merge the transducer with a recording surface of the disc stack. The merge tool includes a merge support surface arranged to contactingly support a medial portion of the flexure while the carrier support surface is disposed between the merge support surface and the transducer. The transducer is merged by aligning the merge support surface with the medial portion of the flexure, and using the merge support surface to displace the distal end of the flexure from the carrier support surface and advance the transducer to a final position.

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